



The Network for Peace through Dialogue

Why Dialogue? (and when, and how, and where?)

World Café facilitated by [Donald Proffit](#) and graphic artist Christine Stockton, with a dramatic performance by Vinie Burrows

Below are one participant's notes on this workshop:

Don Proffit introduced the World Café process with a short power point presentation outlining the purpose of World Café conversations (discovering new meanings through the collective intelligence of participants), the basic World Café principles for hosting conversations that matter and basic World Café etiquette.

Basic principles: Set the context; create a hospitable space; explore questions that matter; encourage everyone's contributions; connect diverse perspectives; listen together for insights; share collective discoveries.

Etiquette: Contribute your thinking and experience; listen to understand; connect ideas; listen together; play, doodle, draw (on the paper that covers the tablecloth).

A reading by actress and activist Vinie Burrows dramatized the perils and suffering that would be brought about by global warming/climate change. This set the context for the dialogue.

After people arranged themselves at tables in groups of four or five, Don Proffit asked them to introduce themselves to one another by having each person describe qualities or attributes of the person opposite them. Then that person had an opportunity to say whether he or she agreed with the description or to correct it.



Then he asked the first question: After witnessing Vinie's presentation, what's important to you about global warming? Why do you care?

Christine circulated through the room listening to conversations at the various tables. She collected the following words and phrases which she wrote down on the interactive mural she was making on a banner at one end of the room. These were listed under the question: How do we get from I to We?

moving but very scary abstract policy vs. REAL PEOPLE
 Is it an emergency? Source of conflict Health and future
 Changing lifestyles So hard to change behaviors
 Our life at stake – our children 1 or 2 degrees is HUGE Awareness Earth is the womb of humanity Lots of learning
 Environmental disaster is connected to all sorts of social disasters – it affects us all. Human convenience is problematic
 Earth is our home Recycle (even tonight)

People moved to new tables for the second question: What opportunities can we see in this situation? After the discussion, people wrote comments on post-it notes and pasted them onto the mural before going to another table.



The comments were:

Education about Mother Earth ---"We ♥ U"

Education & corrective action at a young age

Education that values the dignity, knowledge and experience of every individual learner

Expand awareness with youth by creating or providing experiences for them in nature

Develop a sense of ownership of healthy habits for a healthy earth

Forge interconnection toward working for change

International common ground

Foster global awareness

Links to a global community: We're in the same boat

Using the limitation of resources to promote cooperation instead of competition

Cross-religion, Cross-political party, Cross-sector, Cross-country collaboration

a collective need

If we can come together and humble ourselves, we can change our present circumstances. But we'll have to listen and hear.

The opportunity to change our minds is imminent & fast approaching.

What can you do?

Opportunity 4 collective action aimed at the greater good

There are far more people hurt than benefitting – we need to come together across class

Speak the language of everyday people to make the issues relevant to them.

Environmental issues seem so abstract and intangible

Change language on conservation from statistics & degradation to what the Earth teaches us – find the love of Earth

Dialogue + knowledge/connection + flexibility for change = Shangri La

Cooperation – dialogue for the Earth Community

Conversation by conversation, developing a transnational movement

Learn to live more simply

personal responsibility

Participatory internet enabling collective action

People becoming more closely connected once the TV is turned off

I will spend more time in conversation asking what others feel/think

Make climate change an issue in presidential elections

Propose that presidential candidates be interviewed about plans

Pressure on elected officials—

Raise the political profile of global warming and engage candidates

Hold more "green" events – parties, lectures – to raise consciousness

Confront our Pres. Candidates! VOTE!

Merging personal action with institutional action, political action – Why aren't the candidates being asked about this?

Buy a hybrid car
change office paper, plastic, personal driving habits
Mass transit
Cutting back on using resources (over-consuming)
Living more simply
Alternative lifestyle
Stop wasting travel cups each morning – experience life with less luxuries in order to realize over-usage where you can use less
Making a conscious spiritual choice for voluntary simplicity
New ways of living with a sense of stewardship
Development of new cultural norms – informed by a desire to reverse negative climate patterns
The opportunity to analyze how I waste energy every day
Drop the denial!
To believe that I can make a difference
Stay positive and remember that small change has a big impact
To make connections with others and make changes for the better
Build a BROAD movement
Trust one another's intentions for action
Business actions on re-cycling
Approaching corporations and explain that they may not survive without involvement in improving the environment

After people changed tables again, Don introduced the third question: **What's taking shape here? What are we hearing underneath the variety of opinions being expressed? What is at the center of our listening?**

At the end of the discussion, each person wrote a comment on a strip of colored paper and put it in a paper bag which one person from each table pasted on the mural. Following is one comment from each of the 16 tables.

What is taking shape is Advocacy
(A criticism of the exercise: More litter to add to the environmental waste)
Possibilities, new ideas
It has become more what I can do rather than what they can do
What is the connection between self interest and the interest of others?
Moving out of our own backyards – crossing borders
We're all in this together – a bunch of fish in the same pond
Beginning of a germ of an idea – a case on which to build
We all care about this! We are NOT that different!!

Can we (U.S.) decrease OUR FOOTPRINTS enough?

Despair and hopelessness tend to be underneath our conversation

Caring for earth can be counter-cultural

Connection to the emotions that dealing with challenge evokes – fear, stubbornness, exhaustion, confusionclarity!!

Many ways (arrows drawn in different directions), and on a fish, Help!

Fear . pessimism . optimism . care . empathy

Where does the responsibility lie?

What's taking shape? Understanding what's underneath? Self interest all around.

For the final question, people returned to the table where they started. The fourth question was: What seed might we plant together tonight that could grow into new possibilities for the future of our planet?

Following the discussion, people were encouraged to write comments on a note paper that read "Seeds of Change." One person from the table then "planted" the seeds on the mural onto vines that were emerging from flower pots. Comments below:

Observe and make 1 change a day Think of the choices you make as your footprint on the earth – how can you make the size of your footprint smaller? I'm going to do one good deed for the environment each day. Ride my bike! Re-usable coffee cup. No plastic grocery bags. Recycle energy (personal) Cut down on packaging Small efforts do contribute – open to listen Look for opportunities to make decisions for change daily Insist on there being recycling in my office; fund the actual project Not buying from companies that take over water and seeds from other countries

Sacrifice current life style Call about school recycling Contributing to the environment just one extra step beyond your "comfort" level I'll buy organic, use public transportation, etc. Building demand by the small choices we make to create a stronger market for fair trade and sustainable goods Alignment and living in harmony with nature Support of Friends United with Nature

Talk and more talk to effect change Bring dialogue to my students Explore cafes on controversial issues Gain strength from like-minded people and engage in dialogue with those who disagree

Start a World Café on the block where I live Listening + hearing + sharing + caring together Bring dialogue to my listeners on the radio In dialogue build bridges of understanding Dialogue more to raise awareness of issues Conversations that speak of "I" and grow to "we" Relay what I learned tonight to my family Culture of discussion Plant dialogues Become aware and help others to be aware Individual change influencing others to change also Support greater education on global warming and ways to conserve Spend more time in conversation

Speaking from the "I" Diminish the judgment and come to build bridges of understanding

Listen Not to feel powerless or have a defeatist attitude Feel hope Provide open, non-threatening space/occasions for authentic listening & exchange Self reflection and awareness

Relevant to me – persistence Curb the tide of feeling futility Think positive Fear of alternative leads to collaborative action Self reflection, introspection Remembering that my actions affect

people around the world Take inspiration from indigenous people Cross cultural and economic lines and bring people together for the goal at hand Possibility of widening the circle of concern

Be the bridge Higher consciousness = Shangri La on Earth Diversity is required to sustain life
– no singular solution Modeling that for which we strive, hoping to make positive, small
differences Create experiences in nature Acting individually and collectively
Influence the media to ask the presidential candidates about their position on climate change Have conversations
with them about national policy Write to local politicians and have them get more involved!!